

transmitting the sales information to a production size determining unit;
executing a computer program at the production size determining unit to determine a production quantity of the products to be produced in the future based on the sales information collected from the point of sales terminals and to generate output data indicative of the production quantity determined at the production size determining unit;

201 transmitting the output data indicative of the production quantity determined at the production size determining unit to a flexible manufacturing controller which is operatively connected to the production size determining unit; and

manufacturing the production quantity of the products based on the sales information data collected at the plurality of point of sales terminals and in accordance with the output data indicative of the production quantity from the production size determining unit and controlling the manufacturing of the production quantity of the products via the flexible manufacturer controller and based on and in response to receiving the transmission of the production quantity determined by the production size determining unit.

Please replace claim 33 with the following claim:

202 33. A method for supplying manufactured goods, comprising the steps of:
receiving data identifying actual number of units sold of a good by a sample number of retail outlets;
estimating a total number of units of said good sold for all retail outlets by scaling-up said received data;
predicting future demand for said good based on said estimated total number of units of said good sold;
determining a production quantity of said good based on said predicted future demand;
determining required quantities of raw materials required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good;
transmitting data concerning the required quantities of raw materials

202 required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good to a raw materials controller and using the raw materials controller to provide the raw materials required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good to a manufacturing plant; and

transmitting the production quantity of said good to a flexible manufacturing controller and using the flexible manufacturing controller to control manufacturing of the production quantity of said good at the manufacturing plant.

Please replace claim 52 with the following claim:

52. An apparatus for controlling production of manufactured goods comprising a processor and a memory containing a stored program, the stored program causing said processor to perform the steps of:

receiving data identifying actual number of units sold of a good by a sample number of retail outlets;

estimating a total number of units of said good sold for all retail outlets by scaling-up said received data;

predicting future demand for said good based on said estimated total number of units of said good sold;

203 determining a production quantity of said good based on said predicted future demand;

determining required quantities of raw materials required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good;

transmitting data concerning the required quantities of raw materials required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good to a raw materials controller and using the raw materials controller to provide the raw materials required for manufacturing the production quantity of said good to a manufacturing plant; and

transmitting the production quantity of said good to a flexible manufacturing controller and using the flexible manufacturing controller to control manufacturing of the production quantity of said good at the manufacturing plant.
